

Theology vol 122.

Q U E R I E S

Concerning the

REASONABLENESS

OF REPEALING the

Corporation and Test Acts;

As far as they relate to the

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS;

The OBJECTIONS that may be made
against that REPEAL;

A N D

The most expedient Time for the making it.



L O N D O N :

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Q U E R I E S

Concerning the

REASONABLENESS of Repealing the
Corporation and Test Acts, &c.

Q U E R Y I.



HETHER it must not greatly conduce to the Service of his Majesty, and of the Protestant Succession in his Royal Family, to take off Shackles, and Marks of odious Distinction from the *Protestant Dissenters*, who are the only entire Body of Loyal Subjects to the King, and hearty Well-wishers to his Family,

mily, in his Dominions ? A Body, among whom there neither is, nor ever was, a known, or a suspected, Enemy to his Person and Government.

QUERY II. WHETHER it can consist with common Justice, or good Policy; to keep one of the best Bodies of Subjects; that ever was in this Kingdom, (or in any other) on a level with its worst Enemies, *viz.* the Nonjurors and Papists; on a pretence, that keeping them in that Situation will please a Party in the *Church*, who are for the *King* no farther, than they vainly flatter themselves, the *King* is for the *Church*; by which they mean nothing but Power in themselves, to the Oppression of others ? — Or whether it can consist with common Justice, or good Policy, to keep the *Dissenters* in that Situation, on this different pretence, *viz.* that the putting the *Dissenters* out of that Situation will offend a Party, that has hitherto set itself in the strongest Opposition to the King ? While at the same time that Party of the *Church*, that are as heartily in the Interest of the *King*, and his *Family*,
as

as the *Dissenters* themselves can be, are very desirous, that the *Dissenters* should have these Marks of Infamy, and these Fetters taken off, in order, that that entirely Loyal Party of the *Church* may have the better Assistance from the *Dissenters*, towards supporting the *King's* Government, against the *Pretender*, on the one hand; and against those, who would have him the bare Minister and Servant of the *Church*, instead of the Head and Governour of it, on the other?

QUERY III. WHETHER these Brands of Infamy on the *Dissenters* must not always reflect Disgrace on those, who join with the *Dissenters* in Elections, and other Civil Interests; and on those, who are supported by the Influence of the *Dissenters*, in conjunction with the *Low-Church-Men*, in those Civil Interests?

QUERY IV. WHETHER it was consistent with Gratitude, to pass that Part of the *Corporation Act*, which affects the *Dissenters*, when (as *King Charles II.* himself in his Speech acquainted his first
Parlia-

Parliament, and *Lord Chancellor Hyde* after him) They had Restor'd the Legal Constitution, by their Power and Credit in the Army, and in the House? And whether if it was not consistent with Gratitude to them, to make that Act then, it can be more consistent with Gratitude to continue it now?

QUERY V. WHETHER it has been consistent with Gratitude, to keep the Clause of the 25th of *Char. II.* so long in force, which requires all Officers, Civil and Military, to take the Sacrament, according to the Usage of the *Church of England*, three Months after their Admission to such Offices; when, on the one hand, that Clause was brought in by the *Popish* Faction, headed by the *Duke of York*, to make the *Dissenters* vote against the rest of that Bill? A Bill, which had been brought in by the best Patriots of those Times, to secure the Kingdom against Popery and Arbitrary Power in the most threatening Conjunction; and when, on the other hand, that Clause was voted for by *Alderman Love*, and by the other
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Dissenters in the House, rather than endanger the Bill, on Assurances, which they then put in their Claim to, of being relieved from it, the first favourable Opportunity?

QUERY VI. WHETHER the Behaviour of the chief Body of the *Dissenters* in several remarkable Periods of the Government, since the Passing those Acts, can make the continuing those Acts on the *Dissenters* more consistent with the Gratitude that is due to them, on the account of their Behaviour in those Periods, than it was on account of their Conduct at the Time of the Passing those Acts? As particularly, The steady Behaviour of the great Body of the *Dissenters* to the Church of *England* in the Reign of King *James II*, when the Church was in the greatest Danger; and when the *Dissenters* had an Opportunity of taking their full Revenge, if their good Sense and Virtue had not restrain'd them; as was then fully acknowledged by several of the *Bishops*, the *Clergy*, and other of the most eminent among the Laity of the Church of *England*.

land — Their Behaviour at and since the Revolution — Their Behaviour at the time of the *Union* ; when, in order to promote it, for the better securing the *Protestant Succession*, They prevail'd with the *Church of Scotland*, not to insist on the Repeal of the *Corporation and Test Acts*, on a Reasoning of the Noble *Patriots* of that Time, that tho' it could not possibly be had, as a Preliminary Article to the *Union*, in the then Circumstances of the Kingdom, yet it could not possibly fail to be the Consequence of it, and of having all their best Endeavours to obtain it ? — And finally, the Behaviour of the *Dissenters* under the *Occasional Conformity Bill*, when it was brought on them by their Friends, in the latter End of the Reign of the late *Queen*, only to gain a single Man ? — The Hopes and Promises that were given them on their worthy Behaviour at that Time ? — Or their patient waiting for the full Effect and Accomplishment of them ever since ?

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QUERY VII. WHETHER Ingratitude will not do proportionable hurt to the Government, in its various Interests; as it is always found to do, to every Man in his own Affairs? And whether Honour in a Nation (as well as Justice) is not of a proportionable Advantage to that Nation, as it is to particular Persons?

QUERY VIII. WHETHER making the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper* the Test for an Admission to a Civil Employment, be not a great Perversion of that Sacred Rite of our Religion; by making that, which was designed by its *Divine Author* to be a Test of the Communion of all good Christians, to be a Test of Civil Distinction? And whether it does not, in many Cases, expose it to the greatest Prostitution and Prophanation imaginable?

QUERY IX. WHETHER it is not even a greater Hardship on the *Clergy*, to oblige them to give the Sacrament to all Officers Civil and Military, that offer themselves for that Purpose; than it is even on those

Officers themselves, who are oblig'd to receive it? Since a *Clergyman's* refusing to give it, may be the Loss of all that he has in the World, and an utter Ruin to himself and his Family, by an Action for Damages arising to the Officer, from the Loss of his Qualification: That was well nigh being the Case of Dr. *Br—df—d*, when he was Rector of *Bow-Church*. Whereas the Officer's Resolution against taking the *Sacrament*, can only lose him the Office he might otherwise be possess'd of?

QUERY X. WHETHER, therefore, if the Thing be truly consider'd, the Sacramental Test can be of the least Service to any Body, but to the *Papists*, the *Non-jurors*, and those, that are disaffected, among such as have taken the Oaths to the Government; together with those that are for the Illegal and Exorbitant Power of the *Clergy*; I say, whether the *Sacramental Test* can be of the least Service to any but these, by keeping the Hands of the *Dissenters* ty'd, who, if they were loos'd, would, according to their known Inclinations, the
more

more effectually oppose the *Papists*, &c. and are not in the least dispos'd to oppose any Body else ?

QUERY XI. WHETHER any thing be more likely to revive and encrease the Spirit of Loyalty in the Kingdom, than to shew, that all Subjects shall have Encouragement in proportion to their Loyalty and Affection to the King, tho' they happen to dissent from the Church ? And whether the making their Dissent from the Church a Bar to Preferments, against the warmest and most unshaken Loyalty and Affection to the *King*, does not tend to depress Loyalty, and set up a more outward Conformity to the *Church* (of no manner of Service, but to private Interests) in the stead of it, or in an equal Point of View with it ? And tho' this mere outward Conformity should pass for the *Church*, yet still can it be any thing but a State Idol that draws away the Affections of the People from the King, or shares them equally with him ?

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QUERY XII. WHETHER any Body of good, or even of bad Subjects, in any Age or Country of the World, were ever render'd incapable of Offices of Honour and Profit, while they were still kept liable to Offices of burthensome Trust and Expence? Which is the Case of the *Dissenters*.

QUERY XIII. WHETHER it is so consistent with all that Duty and Affection, that some profess to *the Monarch on the Throne*, to declare so publickly and loudly against the Repeal of the *Sacramental Test*, when the repealing it could not possibly have any other Effect, than to trust the *Monarch on the Throne* with a Power to employ a *Dissenter*, if he, in his great Wisdom, should at any time, and in any Instance, see fit? And whether the arguing so much for keeping his Majesty's Hands ty'd up from being capable to employ any *Dissenter* in all Events, be not a Proof of the Want of that Trust and Confidence, which, from his Majesty's known Character, and suitably to their own Professions

ons of Regard to Him, they ought to repose in Him?

QUERY XIV. WHETHER any thing can look more unkind to the *Dissenters*, than the arguing against the desir'd Repeal of these Acts; when, if it should be obtain'd, it can give the *Dissenters* no Places or Power; but barely restore their Liberty, or, if you will, their Capacity, and their good Name; and set them in that respect on a Level with the rest of their well affected Neighbours.

QUERY XV. WHETHER the *Church*, with all the Laws and Numbers, that she has on her Side, and with all the Revenues, Dignities, Honours, and Employments in the Possession of her Members, can have any Reason to fear the *Dissenters*, who (if they could be suppos'd to be willing to ruin the *Church*, contrary to their known Principles and Practice) can only attack her, as a Country-man might be said to attack a Citadel, if he shook his Stick against it; while the Citadel itself
was

was defended by the best Works, and the strongest Garrison?

QUERY XVI. WHETHER any thing can threaten the *Church* so much, as the Uncharitableness of any great Number of her own *Clergy*, their unreasonable Jealousies, their Affectation of a Monopoly of Civil Power, their attempting to set up what is call'd the *Spiritual Discipline of the Church* over the Laity, by *Codes* of Ecclesiastical Canons; and to obtain new Laws, and retain old ones, in their Disfavour and Prejudice? All which tend to alienate the Affections of the People from her, and to raise their Passions against her? And some, or all of which, have been the great Sources of all Misfortunes that ever befel Her.

QUERY XVII. WHETHER it is not very unjust, as well as highly absurd, to suppose the Toleration Act to be the only fit and proper Barrier between the *Dissenters* and the *Church*, because the *Dissenters* were so modest, as not to urge a better

ter Barrier for themselves in the Infant and Tender State of the Revolution? And especially when King *William*, the glorious Author of it, recommended it so strongly afterwards to his Parliament, to go beyond that pretended Barrier, in favour of the *Dissenters*? And when, tho' incumbred as he was with the War against *France*, he had not Interest enough with the Parliament he first recommended it to, to obtain the Repeal of any Part of those Acts; he yet still renew'd the Recommendation, though in other Words, in the last Speech he made to both Houses, but a little before he dy'd?

QUERY XVIII. WHETHER the restoring Men to their Natural and Civil Rights and Capacities, where the restoring them to those Rights and Capacities, instead of being hurtful to the State, might be of very great Service to it, can with any Modesty be call'd *attacking the Church*? And whether the *Dissenters* attempting to recover those Rights and Capacities, in a Legal way, can be call'd *making an Inroad on their peaceable Neighbours*, only
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because they at present enjoy the Monopoly of Preferments; and because those Rights and Capacities were not restor'd to the *Dissenters* in the Hurry, and the weak State of the Government just after the Revolution?

QUERY XIX. WHETHER it is not highly ungrateful, as well as absurd, to argue from the Law of *Union*, against giving the Ease that is so justly due to the *English Dissenters* and the *Scots Presbyterians*; when it was acknowledg'd by the late *Queen* herself, and by her *English and Scots Ministers*, that the *Union* could not have been had without the Assistance of the *Dissenters* of *England*, or with any Opposition from the Kirk of *Scotland*?

QUERY XX. WHETHER it is not an Insult on the present Legislature, to suppose, that it can't alter or explain the Law of *Union* in favour of the *Presbyterians* of *Scotland* and of the *Dissenters* of *England*? And that, after the Law of *Union* has been alter'd, or at least explain'd, in two or more Instances, that were very much against

against the good Liking of the *Kirk* of *Scotland*? And, when even the *Corporation* Act itself has been in part repeal'd since the *Act* of *Union*, (without the least Complaint from any Quarter,) by an Act *for the better Regulating Corporations*, in the 5th of *George I.*?

QUERY XXI. WHETHER the Government can want any special and particular Security for the good Behaviour of a Man, that frequents a *Dissenting Meeting*, where no body goes, but those that are the most zealously well affected to the Government? Or whether, if such a Security was wanting, it can be any Security to receive the Sacrament with the *Church* of *England*, where all the *Papists* receiv'd it for about ten Years, after the Reformation, under Queen *Elizabeth*; and which the *Pope* offer'd to allow them to do, if the *Queen* would but acknowledge his Supremacy?— Where several *Papists* receiv'd it in the Reign of King *James* the second?— And where thousands have receiv'd it since, who have Plotted, and Rebell'd, against his

late Majesty, the first of this *Illustrious House*, that adorn'd the *British Throne*?

QUERY XXII. WHETHER therefore, if the Reasons aforesaid be well weigh'd, the *Sacramental Test* can be suppos'd to be the least Security to the *Church of England*?

QUERY XXIII. WHETHER since Civil Tests * secure both Houses of *Parliament* against *Papists* being Members of either, and were thought sufficient by the Wisdom of *Parliament*, to secure the *Church of England* in the *Legislature*, without enjoining the *Sacramental Test*, even five Years after the *Sacramental Test* was required of all Officers Civil and Military; whether, I say, those Civil Tests mayn't be sufficient to keep *Papists* out of Employments, and to secure the *Church* against all Officers Civil and Military, without keeping the *Sacramental Test*, in force, over and above those Civil Tests abovementioned?

* The Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, and the Declaration against Transubstantiation, and the Worshipping of Saints and Angels.

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QUERY XXIV. WHETHER it is reasonable for those, that wish well to the Present Government, to divide its Friends, by asking this Question, *viz. Whether the Services, which the Bishops, and Clergy, and the Friends of the Establish'd Church, can perform to the Monarch on the Throne, are not considerable enough, to be put in the Balance against those, which he may expect from the Dissenters, and their Well-wishers?* * Whether, I say, it can be reasonable to ask this Question, unless it should be suppos'd, that the United Services of both the *Bishops &c.* and the *Dissenters* are too much for the *Monarch on the Throne*? Or unless some, who value themselves on their Abilities to serve him, will not perform these Services to him, in case others, who are as willing to perform them to him as they, (tho' they should not happen to be so able,) are but made capable of rendering him those Services; even when he wants or requires those Services from them?

QUERY XXV. WHETHER we can ever expect a Time of more settled Tranquillity

* The Dispute adjusted.

quillity at Home, and Abroad, than the present? Or whether there ever was a Time, when Bigottry had less Power in this Nation? Or when the *Dissenters*, and many of the *Clergy*, and the other Friends of Liberty, were more earnestly desirous to get rid of these Acts? When fewer Persons espous'd them? Or at least with less Warmth, than at present?

QUERY XXVI. WHETHER the Repeal of these Acts can ever be thought more seasonable, than when, after the most undoubted and zealous Loyalty and Affection of the whole Body of the *Dissenters* to the Government, ever since the *Revolution*, (which settled our present happy Constitution, and secured the Liberty of the Subject;) When I say, after this, it shall still be suppos'd, by a late Writer, that the *Episcopal Church* is more likely to support the *Monarchy*, than the *Dissenters*? Whereas the *Dissenters* ever have been, and are ready, at all hazards, to support the *English*, the *Revolution Monarchy*; as the *Presbyterian Church* of *Scotland* has the *British Monarchy*, ever since the

the *Union*; while almost the whole Body of the *Episcopal* Clergy has supported a *Monarchy*, unknown to the Laws of *England*, founded on the absurd, pernicious, and illegal Doctrines of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance *; till they overthrew it once, and brought in *Presbytery*; and till, to the utmost danger of the Protestant Religion and Liberty, they were afterwards very near bringing in *Popery*.

QUERY XXVII. WHY should the Repeal of these Acts be more prejudicial to the *Whiggs* at their next Elections, or to the Publick Peace, than the Repeal of the *Occasional Conformity* and *Schism* Acts was? Which, it was then said, was a Trap laid by the *Tories*, to deprive the *Whiggs* of their Seats in the next *Parliament*, tho' every body knew, that that Repeal was no Trap laid by the *Tories*, was no Trap, in which any *Whigg* was ever caught, or by which any *Whigg* lost a Vote at the next Elections, or which made so much as a *Nine-days* Wonder?

* See B----p H---'s Sermon, the last 30th of *January*.

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QUERY XXVIII. On the other hand, may there be no danger to the *Whiggs*, if the Spirit of the *Dissenters* should be damp'd, or be quite sunk, by refusing them this so long look'd for Repeal; and if they should remain less active, or quite broken and sour at the next Elections? And can any one be sure, if that should be the Case, that that Breach will ever be heal'd? Or that that Sourness will ever wear off again? Especially if Methods, that are very obvious, should be used, to widen that Breach, and encrease that Sourness?

QUERY XXIX. WHETHER there be more danger to the Publick Peace, by giving the Repeal now so earnestly desired, and thereby quieting all farther Agitation about it; than by endeavouring to put a Stop to it now, and yet suffering it to be thought, that the Design is to be kept alive, till after the next Election?

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